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KASMIR

April 1988
Vol 1 No 1

Kasmir, Original Idea by

Ghulam Rasool Santosh

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KASMIR is published quarterly and is dedicated to readers with interest in the social, cultural and literary heritage of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, India.

Kasmir welcomes letters, original articles, essays, poems and illustrations related to the theme of the magazine.

Views expressed by various contributors are not necessarily those of the publisher.

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Cover

G.R. Santosh

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A NOTE TO THE READERS

"So many faiths and so many paths" said the great Saint Ramakrishna Paramahansa. This, the first issue of Kasmir is the product of a "faith". A belief that there is a need for a magazine to promote the social, cultural and literary heritage of the people of Jammu and Kashmir - our rich past and traditions. Rather a simple faith! The path however is not as simple. It requires dedicated efforts, an abundance of energy, lot of free time and generous financial support. The objectives deserve it. Indeed a major undertaking.

The success of our endeavors is not possible without, and in fact depends on, the support of our readers. It is indeed only through your response, and expression of your desires that a more ambitious, mature, and appropriate format should evolve.

Kasmir is a non-profit initiative and depends on the support of friends and readership. It is through the generous support of "Friends of Kasmir" that we have committed to publish four issues in 1988-89 (Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter). This commitment is an expression of our belief that there is indeed a need for a magazine such as this. Your interest and support will determine if in fact it is true.

A number of very talented volunteers have joined the editorial staff who are willing to give their time and effort to this "faith" and to the "path" we have chosen. We share the beliefs, our path is common. Your support, readership and interest will vindicate us.

We welcome our readers and encourage especially young readers to participate in our efforts by contributing and by sharing their views, or (path) ideas and experiences in the few pages of this magazine. This will help to further our initiatives and make our efforts worthwhile. We also welcome any contribution by way of subscription, advertisement and/or donation to help pay the exorbitant costs of printing and mailing.

EDITORS



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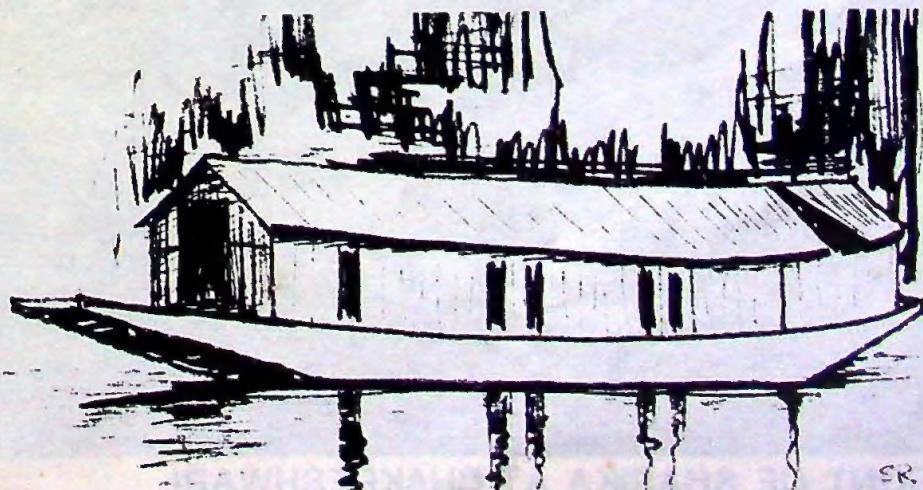
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WHY TRADITIONS

D.N. Dhar

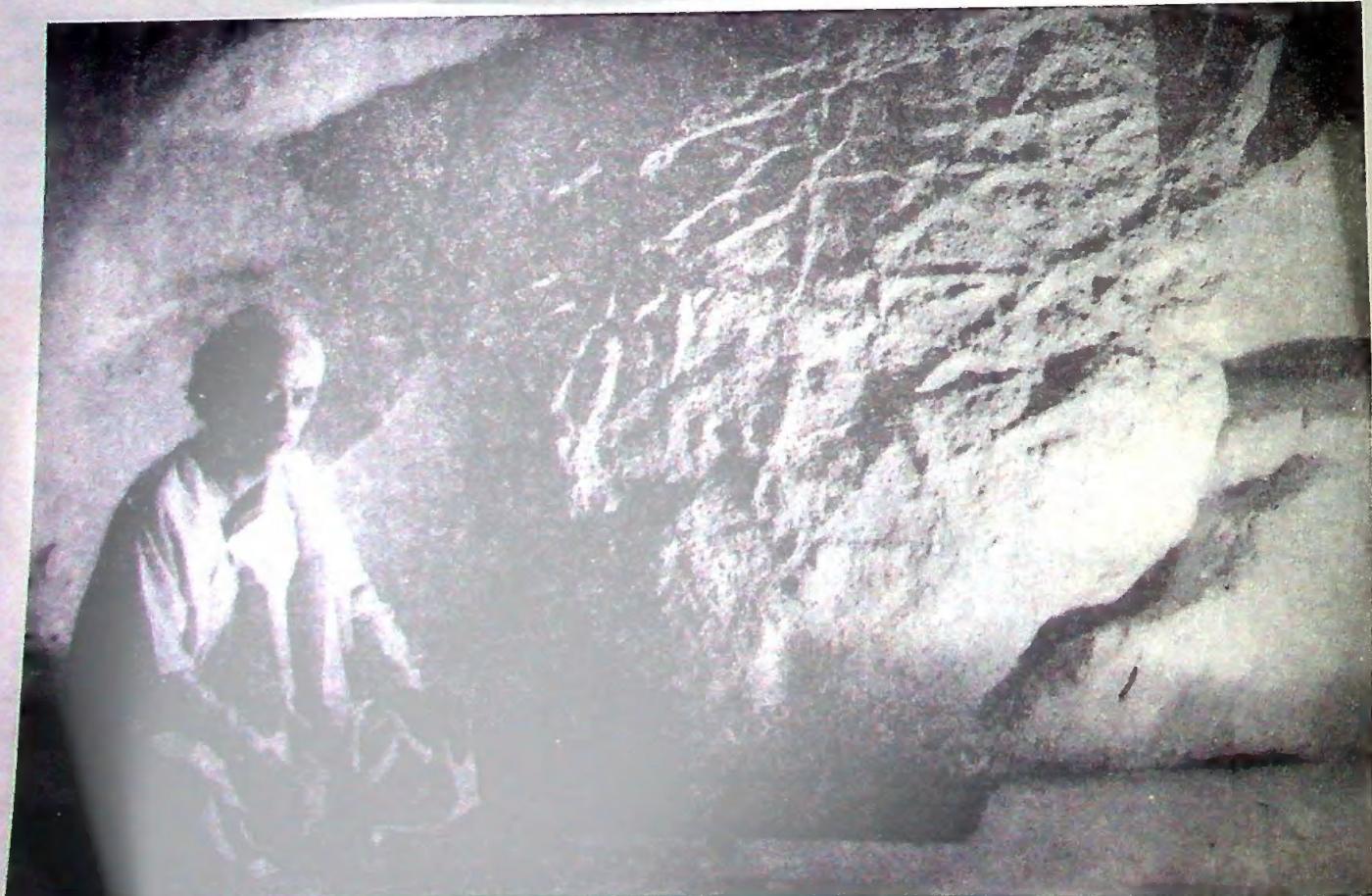
Pages of man's history would have been brighter had so much blood not been spilt in the protection of "our own culture". Culture for our purpose means intellectual development expressed by unconscious growth of habits, traits, taste; in fact refinement in general influenced by many phenomena including climate. Multiplicity of bee or bacterias is their culture, but for man it means multiplicity and very much more. When culture becomes a heritage expressed through the entire state of a people's art, to which progressive among them keep on adding till it shapes as a treasure, its value becomes a national possession to be defended against encroachment and alien influence. Time also sorts things out for national cultures. Life among people keeps up with the change and fashions it according to the needs of changing social values and of arts. This process makes for and builds traditions. Maturity of cultures means that it is something that has to be looked after and be proud of for the image it helps to project beyond the frontiers of one's own country. Having acquired this status, tradition helps to build a whole civilisation to receive a meaning and a purpose; architecture being among the five fine arts expressive of a people's culture and an evidence of a heritage, needs its votaries. For architects, traditions become springs from where to drink for inspiration and helps them to add to and be instrumental in creating this heritage. Whatever technological progress or change in society's outlook on life and affairs generally, the attitude towards art changes (in itself a sign of progress) with cultural advancement. Importance of traditions as something living and their updateness as expressions of scientific outlook of a community is vital as it presupposes powers to discriminate. Stagnant they become prejudices. Only people with a dead soul will act and talk in terms of turning their back to traditions. Coming into being of fresh chapters in traditions is an unconscious journey; taken in the name of refinement if they have to endure. With cultured individuals and matured nations, respect for tradition is a sign for advance made in arts. Disregard for it means decay of the spirit; to that end there is enough historical evidence.

(By permission of the author. Mr. Dhar is the author of "Thoughts on Architecture" a collection of editorials from "Indian Architect" published by Sterling Publishers Private Limited N. Delhi, India)





SHARIKA AT
CHAKRESHWARI



SANTOSH IN FRONT OF SHARIKA AT CHAKRESHWARI

Ghulam Rasool Santosh

With an evocation to the Devine Mother, I shall venture to give what may, at best, be an over-view of the most exalted Shri-Yantra enshrined in the lap of the Hari-Parvat. This yantra, the fountain of all knowledge, is vertically rock-carved on one flank of the Hari-Parvat hill, known as Chakreshwari in local parlance.

The name Chakreshwari in itself is a composit sound, when scanned it reveals number of revelations. "Cha" is pronounced as "tse" in Kashmiri language. Thus "tsekr-i-shawar" reveals that the chakra has six twists. "Tsek-i-reshwaer", basically it is the abode of Rishis. The name, "Kashir", as pronounced by Kashmiris, their motherland, is same as Sharika. "Sha" meaning six, "aer" the basic triangle, forming the letter "ka" in Sharda script. Another form would be, "ka-sha-ira" six "ka's" afloat, which is a clear reference to the Sati-Sara, the lake of Sati, the present Kashmir. The yantra hexagon, star in itself, is created by three "ka's", which is Treka, Kashmir's Shiva philosophy. Same three "ka's" are six "ka's" in motion which is "shaka". This hexagon is the core of Shri-yantra comprising nine triangles. Five pointing downwards represent Shakti and five vowels. Four triangles pointing upwards represent Siva and four consonants.

Since ages, the knowledge supreme has been, and shall ever continue to be ensconed in the rock of Sharika for time indeterminate. But, to

our chargin, the universal truth it embodies have remained shrouded in the veil of ignorance and mystery; revealed only to the cultivated and the enlightened. Whatever the reason the Chakreshwari has remained a place of worship for the devout and the laity. But the secrets of yantra have got diffused in course of time.

I have been studying the cosmic dance of the line of this yantra. These lines create different geometrical configurations in the moonlit nights throughout the year. the legendary bird Hae'r, Sharika, is also carved in the yantra itself at the spot where the lines of yantra create an image of a pot, called "vae'r" (container) in Kashmiri.

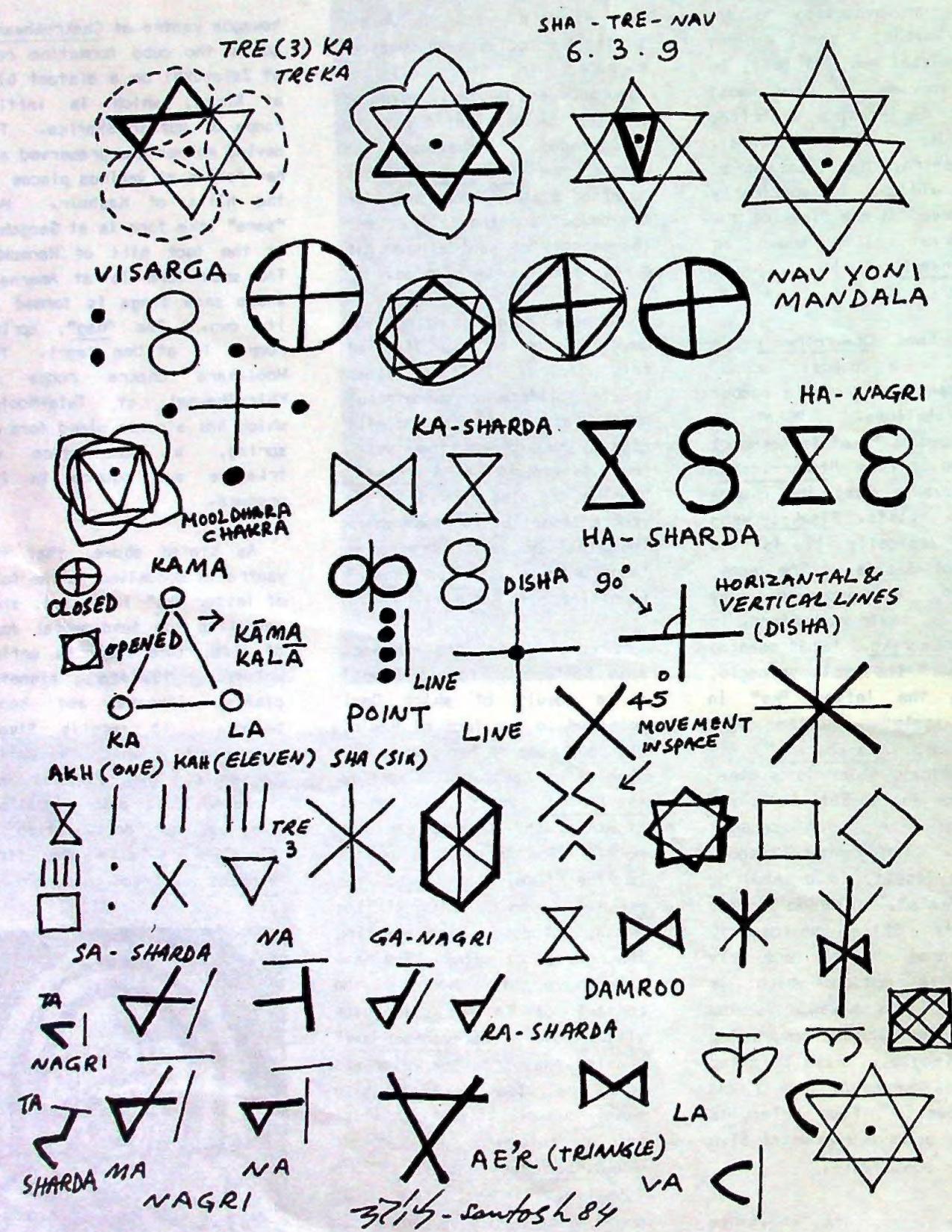
According to the legend, sage Kashyapa performed "tapa" as a result of which Devi appeared in the form of Hae'r, with a pebble in her beak. The pebble in Kashmiri is called Kan-i-phol, which also means "that which bloomed on the rock." She threw this pebble in the lake, Sati Sar, the present Kashmir, thus killing demon, Jaludbhava and enabling the release of water. The name Jaludbhava, if read in the context of Kashmiri language will be, Zal-vud-bah-av, meaning that from the water was seen the steam. "Bah" also means numerical twelve, which in a reference to cosmic sound. Anahatta chakra in Kundalini. Vani is cosmic sound and vane'y is water in Kashmiri. Akash-vani appeared as "roopa" light in the cosmos, and "Zala", volcano, as fire in the lake of Sati. If it is

hexagon yantra at Chakreshwari, so is the cube formation rock at Zalamukhi on a distant hill at Khrew, which is initial roopa of mother Sharika. The devine mother has preserved all her roopas at various places in the hills of Kashmir. Her "sara" lake form is at Gangabal at the foot hill of Harmukh. The snow form is at Amarnath where snow linga is formed on its own. The "nag", spring roopa, is at Uma Nagri. The Mooldhara chakra roopa at Khir-Bhavani at Tula-Moola, which has a seven sided form of spring, a combination of triangle and square in its oneness.

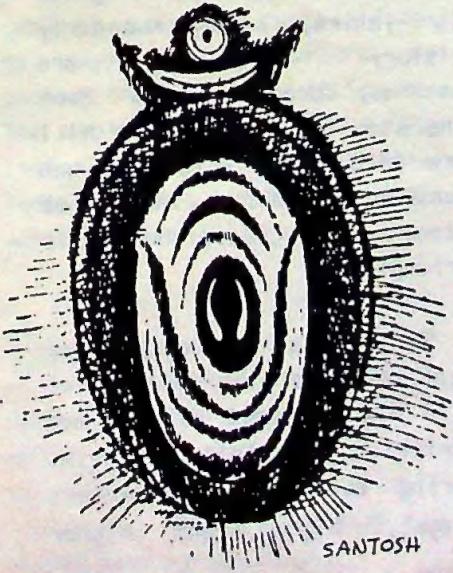
As stated above, that the yantra is conceived in the form of letter "ka" in motion, thus revealing the fundamental form of life, informing the entire universe - the stars, planets, plants, insects and human beings. It recalls Siva's damroo out of which the entire Varnamala, the alphabet was produced. It also symbolises the combined articulation of first swara with the first vinjana vowel and consonant.



SANTOSH



It is held that entire Universe is nothing but vibration. It is a state when shakti-energy, is equally distributed in cosmos, thus there is no light, the seed of "Prakriti", nature. This primordial vibration or pulsation, has inherent seed of expansion in terms of movement, which becomes visible as light, when it gets spanda, the motion and churns itself. In other words, there is in it the initial desire to manifest itself, which becomes manifest "Bindu" and "Nada" - two points of "visarga", suggesting creation, emanation and projection. This original intention and cognition and its phenomenalisation as Bindu is the concept of "kama-kala", Kama the initial desire and kala is, its creative expression. The visualisation of the same concept has given birth to the "moola-trikona" - the basic triangle. This very triangle is defined "space in space" and to encircle the whole cosmos, it results in two interlocked triangles - hexagon yantra. The three lines of a triangle also result in a hexagon. The same very triangle as activated energy results in pentagon and becomes visible as light. It is third chakra of Kundalini which is visualized as two pentagons in motion, where shakti is perceived as light by yogis.



SANTOSH

To know the emergence of sound through our human system, it becomes obvious that when we part our lips and create sound the result is "ma". The more we sustain this sound, it becomes nasal "an" and when we close our mouth, it becomes mantra "AUM". The blowing of the nose results in the seed mantra "iem" the initial Nada. The same is the "ni" swara in Sargam when, reversed. The gutteral hushing sound through "ha" becomes "gha", which finally becomes "ka", the first consonant. The process of emerging sound is "laya", the rhythm, represented by letter "la". Thus we have the seed formula of Kama-Kala and Kah.

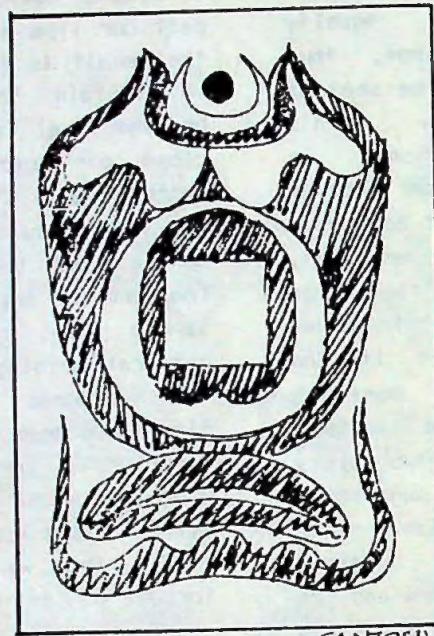
"Kah" beside being the sound "ka-ka" is numerical eleven in Kashmiri. There are mantras based on these "ka" and "ha" which are called Hadi and Kadi, and are employed for the worship of Shri-yantra. The formation of letter "ka" as two triangles is the yantra form and "ha" is Prana-shakti, the vital breath which is warm and as well as cold by nature, when one lets out the breath against ones palm.

Kah, numerical eleven in Kashmiri has deep significance in its cultural ethos. Just to say a few, will reveal the deep rooted concept. Kah-nether; is a ritual performed on eleventh day of newly born to give him or her the name. Kah-Nov, that which has eleven names, also means that concept of kah flourished: Kah-kah-pal, the stone of "kah". This stone is there at Mattan at the foot hill of Martand temple, when touched by eleven, kah, persons by their fingers and uttering "kah-Kah", is lifted in the air: Gada-kah, falls on eleventh, a preparatory day for thirteenth on which falls "Siva-ratri". It reveals its

secret when read as: ga-ad-ka-ha, which means that ga is half of ka, as well as ha. When two ga's or ha's are joined the result will be the letter ka. The preparation of eleventh and twelfth is for Vatak pooja which is a ritual performed on siva-ratri. Vatauk is an assemblage of various objects and elements. The word itself means assemble and when read as vataka; and Scanned as vat-ka, means enclose ka. There is a proverb in Kashmiri: sha-te-tre-te-nav-te-kah, which means that six, three; nine and eleven. This expression is used for a person who talks of impossible things which he can never fulfil. In this proverb is the concept of basic triangle, as three, its twine quality as hexagon and its three fold nature nine, which also is a yantra known as nav-yoni-mandala or brahma-yoni, the cosmic womb. Kah, numerical eleven, as two lines, vertical and horizontal, bisecting each other at 90° angle encircles the whole cosmos in terms of four dishas - directions. The movement of the same is multiple sign, cross indicating the 450° movement in space. It is these two lines which enfolds the secret knowledge of yantra. The invisible point at the bisection is the key to revelation. The revelation is incomplete without sound. Thus we have the mantra: the composite sound and its corresponding image yantra. Yantra also is visualized image of movement in space and mantra, the sound formula; the initial causation in the cosmos. It is because of this concept the seed mantras are employed to awake the Kundalini shakti concealed in human body. There is another proverb; akh-te-akh-gav-ze-te-kah, which means that one and one is two as well as eleven.

It is interesting to note that the assemblage of vatuk on Sivaratri reveals the ancient concept of Tantra along with its historical background. In vatuka first is made, ae'r' a triangular shape made of grass; over it is put an earthen pitcher, called naot, which also means that "na-oat" na is enclosed. "Na-oat" in sharda is simple projected line against a vertical line and when enclosed becomes the "Aer" triangle "or na" in Nagri. The pitcher is filled with water, "vane", which is a reference to satisara lake. It also indicates the vani of na, which by enclosing becomes ka. In it is put kah, eleven walnuts; doney. Doney sound is the same as dhavnl in Sanskrit - Dhavnl of "ka-ha". The pitcher is then covered by an octagonal lid woven with willow, called ka-ni. Ni when reversed becomes seed mantra "Iem". Octagon itself is enfoldment of Prakriti, and when taken in its two fold becomes sixteen, four squares in motion, the fifth chakra of Kundalini which represents ether. It is customary to play with sea shells on Siva-ratri which in Kashmiri is called Hara. This shell has the shape of bird Sharika. Same way there is another sea shell of triangular shape, when opened becomes two triangles as later "ka" formulation. It is called "Kaw-Shup". The sound is very near to Kashyapa. This sea shell is found in rivers along with wooden pieces called hak. The Sound is "HA-KA" and in reverse "KAH".

Siva-atre is called Haerat in Kashmir. This name has three combinations in it. Trahi an expression when something horrifying happens. To my understanding, it recalls volcanic activity in early times. Tahaer is yellow rice,



SANTOSH

which is a must on every ritual and occasion. The yellow rice is put in a terracotta plate called toke in kashmir, on a crossing early morning. A red chilly is put on top of yellow rice. It is a clear reference to zala-Volcane. Tahaer also is taken to Chakreshwari on Saturdays which is mixed with fried liver of a lamb. Tservan: liver and "tahaer" yellow rice when scanned, will be tsar-van-te-hauer", which means realize van-haer which is sharika. Same when reversed is "Harvan" which is located at the foot hill of Harmukh. This place is very significant historically. It was in this area that the terracotta tiles were recovered which to my understanding are pre Buddha era bearing the early wisdom of Sri yantra of Mother-Sharika. Pit dwellers also were dug out in the same area. There is a famous place called Indra-home where kah, eleven stones, are stuck in the ground.

The monolith rock of Mother Sharika, smeared with redoxide sendhe in kashmiri, is a remembrance of her initial volcanic form. When this word sendher is scanned it reads as send-i-hae'r, the sharika of sindh. River Sindh emerges from Gangabal Lake.

Mother's rock and other rock formations around Hari-parvat of Ganesa, Kali, Sat-resh, Sheetla and Laxmi are phenomena unrevealed up till now to the people. The images concealed in Mother's besides original Shri-yantra, reveals the early history. The images are mantras, composit sound. Even the steps going up to the hill are calculated, which are one hundred eleven: the three lines which create the basic triangle.

Tantra is a concept of realization of the totality of life along a well defined and strictly disciplined path. During evolution, at various stages, higher and higher



VISHAKA RAINA AT 5

states of awareness dawned on the individual consciousness which brought forth the realization that the whole is One and within. This Oneness and wholeness demands expression in pure conceptual geometry portraying Shad sound, which in essence is sunya void.

As a painter, I am concerned with the image and colour, to create the halo of realization. My Images are combinations of yantra and my own experience. The whole canvas is symbolic, including the black frame, indicating the limited field of activity within it frame.

In this area the point Bindu, takes birth, unfolding itself in a Yantra, and seeking expression in an iconic form which is essentially of the universal Mother-Shakti (Sharika: who is the cause and embodiment of Creation.)



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(PEERZADA GHULAM AHMAD "MAJOOR")

T.N. Kaul

Lend my thy ear, O my dazed darling!
I shall unfold to thee the elan of love.
The length and breadth of the vale
I traversed, like one lost to himself.

I ran after pirs, fakirs and jogis,
Bypassing no holy place.
I was sniffing the air for tomorrow's
Tidings, when my country would be free.

But there was only talk of the past,
Of how the far-off world moved.
The star-studded night fell and moonlight
Took the hill and date in its embrace.

Dead tire, I perched on a mound. My body
Slept but mind was awake to a new tune.
The morning breeze thus unfolded
The new message to the garden:

Lending ear to what tomorrow brings
Will make thee self-conscious.
A new world shall arise from vacuum,
And barrenness yield to blossom.

Bulbul shall be crowned; hawks will obey
him and eagle-king shall guard his palace.
Roses shall evaluate their own worth;
Bulbul shall sing at a premium.

With spears upright, thorns shall keep
Watch lest any rose should come to harm.
The kite shall turn vegetarian,
And not pick on helpless insects.

Mountains shall deliver jewels, their peaks
Emit gold, and the sky rain pearls.
Emeralds shall grow out of Dal Lake,
Pearls float on Wular's surface.

Pigmies, giants, elves, demi-gods,
All shall be levelled to human size.
Fanatics, bigots shall be disarmed
And religion will be a mere hallmark.

Peerzada Ghulam Ahmad
"Mahjoor" (b-1887 d.1952) was
the poet-laureate of Kashmir.
This poem, written years before
freedom dawned on India, has
been translated from original
Kashmir by T.N. Kaul, author
and journalist.

The poet, while dreaming of
a New Kashmir, vividly
captures the mood of the future
and foresees an egalitarian
society based on social
justice.



SD

KASHMIRI SPRING SONGS

M.K. Tikoo

To the affluent, winter in Kashmir is luxury and sitting on a woolen carpet with a tea-urn purring before them, the white snow-flakes falling from the sky are the soft petals of flowers. The soft white world all around them brings a unique feelings of pleasure. But to the large populace winter is a terrible despot. When the March-April arrives, the clouds drift away and sun appears smelling on the houses, trees, mountains and rivers. Nature rejuvenates and regains life. Nature's glories enchant the hearts of men, more so of the poets and the painters. The Kashmiri poet sings of its exquisite charms and the fascinated painter depicts her loveliness on canvas.

The Spring in Kashmir has inspired the Kashmiri poets in different ways. Some have been affected by the purely sensuous or aesthetic pleasure that Nature gives them, while others have discovered a spiritual meaning in the beauty of Nature in spring.

Kh. Habib feels delighted to observe the flowers in spring. What a feast for his eyes. The varied pageant of their colours and their threefold appeal to the senses of sight, smell and touch transports him with pleasure. In ecstasy he sings:
Bahar Av Nau Bahar av
Kash havas dilkiy gamgosa trav
rang-baring navi kar kosman
krav
Bahar av Nav Bahar av

He also gets aflamed with the passion in the alluring and romantic atmosphere of spring. He feels that birds too feel intensely the pangs of love. Thus echo the throbbing of his own heart:

Spring flowers all have blossomed
O Majna, listen to the oriole's walls
from the vernal wood has come down the kestur
Ah ! but aflame with love's burning
That left its body charred and dead

Pandit Prakash Ram adores the beauty of spring but this adoration he elaborates into a mystic truth. As dark night is followed by the light of the day, the dreary winter by the smiling spring so too sorrows are followed by joys. Thus pleasure and pain are transitory and follow in cycle. One can see a sort of allegory in the following lines of the poet. They have symbolic significance. Tears correspond to the dreadful winter and joys are associated with spring. Thus after tears one can expect laughter. Is not it futile to bewail the sufferings and sorrows for they will pass off:

Av bahar bol bulbulo
son valo baryo shadl
drav kath kosh groza pan
chhulo
zara chalanam vandike dadi
Vazu neudra vuni chai sulo
Kav kumare veyl posh nullo
aav nalan zan phari yadl
hav vondku gam gosa gulo

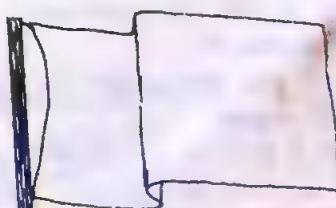
O! bulbul now sing for spring has arrived
Come hither have a fill of joy
The frost has melt wash your life and limb
Winter's sorrow and dread has drifted away
The chirping birds and the golden oriole
Complain of the winter's agony
Flowers do give vent to the griefs and grievances about the dreary winter.

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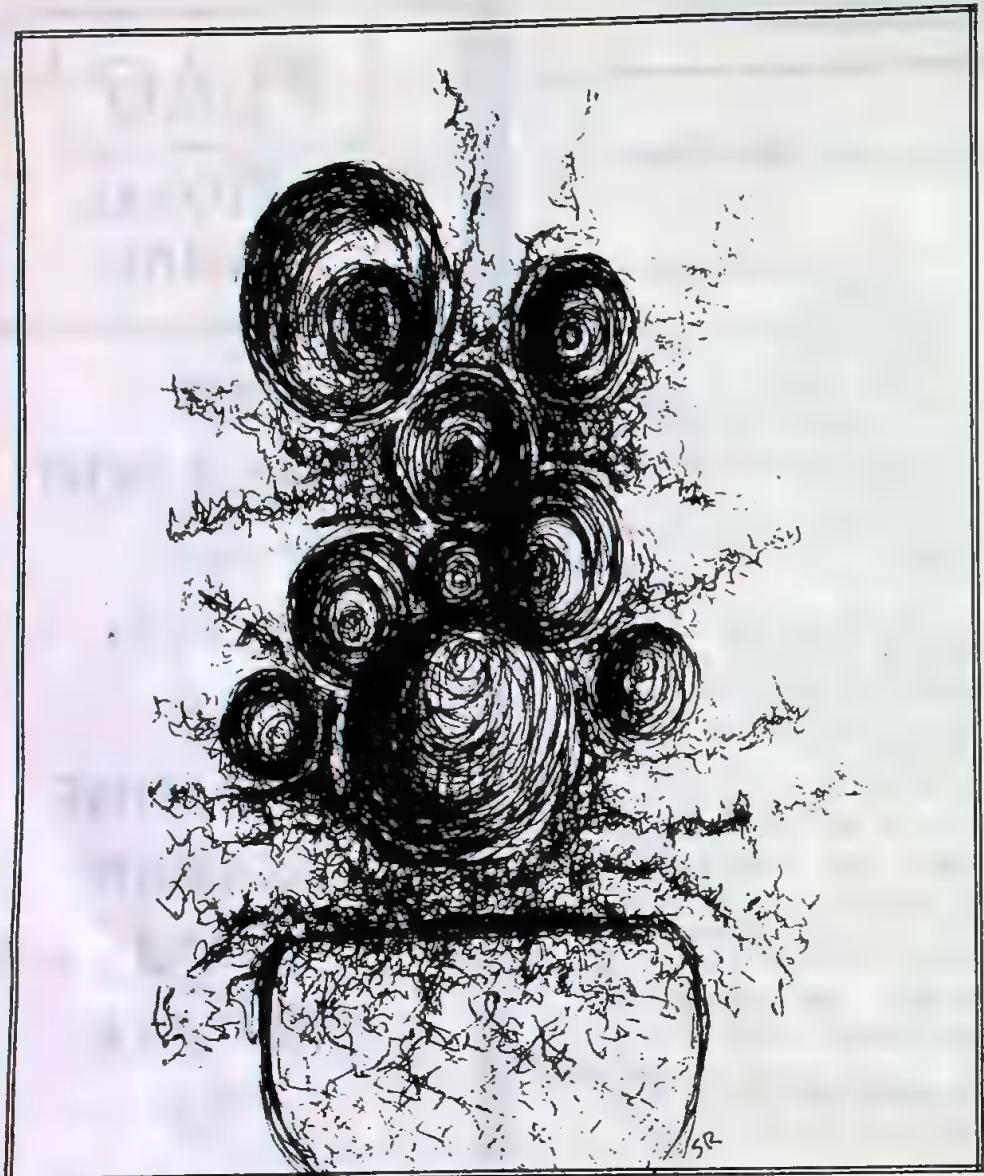
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Arnal's Tragedy

Arnal's personal life was a tragic one as she was forsaken by her husband. And when spring arrives she longs for her lover, from whom she is unfortunately separated. Thus her emotion of joy roused by the blooming spring is turned into longing and yearning and she pales and languishes in remembrance of her lover. She bewails his betrayal:

Spring flowers are in bloom
In the garden;
Iris too has grown near
graveyards,
And one yearns for the sight of
the lover

Haba Khatoon was born in the 16th century at Pampore. She was a renowned lyricist who poured out her heart through Kashmiri poetry. The lilting melody and cadence of her numbers has immortalized her. She sings of spring in the following verses:

Yeti pan varshan tai rhal
bavantary
Sontary son av sonterary
Sosan gulluri yiri kiran
zentay.

Whenever the rain-god blesses
with his showers, fruits and crops
grow in plenty and wherever spring
comes thither come love, the lord
of spring, the lily, and the
saffron-beds will sprout:

O, Narcissus come soon to enjoy
the bloom.
The winter days are gone;
Flowers in the woods to have
bloomed,
For spring is in our minds

Mehjoor's Freshness

Mehjoor brought the freshness of spring to his sweet songs written about spring. He brought colour and beauty to his songs by singing of gul and bulbul. Tagore

discovered in his poetry Wordsworthian love of Nature. But unlike Wordsworth, Mehjoor was not a mystic and did not find any supernatural meaning in the beautiful objects of nature nor did he find any spiritual bond with her. There is no trace of pantheism in his nature-poetry. He simply observes its beauty in a realistic manner and with advent of spring he, like Wordsworth, joins in the universal rejoicing. Thus he says:

Nagan kilan to aran
Joyan ta absharn
Dyut soz nav baharan
Bagan kohan ta balan
Kam rang gul chi khalan
Spring streams and brooks
Rivers, rivulets and cataracts
The fresh spring has filled them all
With pleasing notes and music
Gardens, mountains and hills.
Valleys, woods and river banks
are coloured with the hues of
flowers.

Symbol of God

To Zinda Kaul (the first Kashmiri to win the Sahitya Academy award) the Nature in spring appears a symbol of God. The visible embodiment of the invisible creator. He says in his poem "Sont":

Ava hita dyava bani kansi
didaroo
Song chav ani balayaro ner
Makhmur vari chi cashmi khhumaro
Sont chavani balayaro ner

Oh! my friend please come out to
enjoy the spring. It is an
invitation to see some friends for
many eyes are heavy with longing,
like a sick man's to look at you.
Near the brook, the willow groove is
in leaf and is at its best. The
green will refresh the eyes and the
cool shade will sooth the heart.

(Courtesy Koshur Smachar
April 1987 N. Delhi)

LIFE A MYSTERY ?

Mohan K. Swaminatri

Life a Mystery?

LIFE!
What it is?
A mystery!
Polluted minds make it more mysterious.
Seekers throw open their experiences to the world

The world makes dogmas of these.
One soul userps another soul,
Through Ignorance.
Ignorance is to be replaced by bliss.

Bliss is to be attained by a free mind.
Free mind cuts the bonds of --
Cast, creed, colour even religion.
Becomes one - Absolute ONE.
Experiences ALL IN ONE and IN ALL.
A continuous process, That is--
LIFE

Mohan K. Swaminatri

(Courtesy Koshur Smachar
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KANGRI

Dr. Z Azurdah

Whosoever invented the Kangri must have been a great craftsman. When one scrutinizes each of its parts, it presents itself before him in a new shape every time. Whenever I delve deep into its structure, I cannot help extolling the high sense of beauty of its maker. It is a pity though that the Kashmiri is not without his rivals, and they were born even before his own birth. Outsiders arrogate to themselves all the good qualities found in the native. The business rivals, eager to make a fast buck, have introduced sub-standard goods into the valley and gradually all quality products have vanished.

Take, for example, the world-famous amri apple or mushka-budji, that delectable variety of rice cherished so fondly in bygone days. Now these have become a dream. Go to the Repore area and there you will find everything except grapes, for which it used to be once famous. The white apples are also not available now, and new breeds of fish brought from outside have driven the indigenous variety out of rearing ponds.

Mercifully, the Kangri has until now survived the countless onslaughts made on it by western civilization. The dressing gown came to replace the pheran (loose kashmiri kurta under which the Kangri is placed), but it did not have the capacity to accommodate this heating device. It was too long and too narrow for the purpose.

Another assault followed. the Kashmiri was jolted out of the age-old habit of sitting on the floor, with a namda, gabba, carpet or even a mat spread on the floor. He used to squat comfortably against the wall with the Kangri perched cosily under the pheran. With the introduction of the chair, he lost this squatting posture and, so to say, got suspended in mid-air where Kangri could not play its role. While he was naturally elated at his elevation, he could hardly realize what he had lost in the process.

The electric heater has also threatened the existence of the Kangri. The saving grace, however, is the despicably low voltage in the valley. One has to search with the help of a candle to locate a properly-lit electric bulb. In these circumstances, how can the poor electric heater discharge its function? In short, God has come to the rescue of the Kangri which would otherwise



have been lying in some forgotten nook of the house or else one would have had to visit a museum to see it. The fact remains that if the Almighty wants to save anything, no one, local or from outside, can harm it.

To warm up one's body and save one's life from the biting cold, the Kangri can prove even less expensive than medication in a charitable hospital. But I fail to understand why man looks down on every nice and lovely thing. Some simply do not realize that the Kangri, with its fiery contents, is not at all meant to be used for tossing at someone else's head. But what can I say to such people? In these matters, everyone is guided by his own nature.

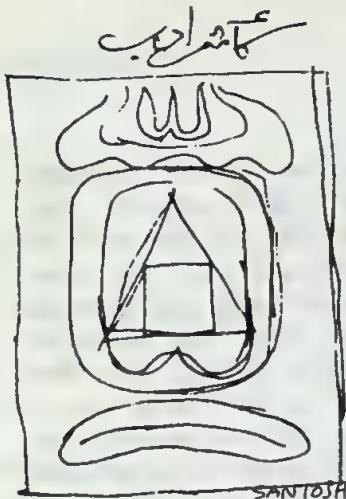
Kangri, to me, is like a handsome and fair-complexioned bride. Its round, beautiful silvery arms are simply ravishing. With the hands

perched against its sides, it stands in front of a man so charmingly that he feels like gazing at it endlessly. Its nose reminds one of "Qazakh's arrow" to which Kashmiris invariably liken the beloved's nose. But they conveniently forget that this very arrow can also take one's life.

Alas! there is no equivalent in Kashmiri language for "beauty", which fact is deeply regretted by my friend Qazi Ghulam Mohammud. When we see a beautiful object, we are not satisfied with anything less than "murderous like poison" or "ravishing like lightning" for describing it by saying all this we not digressing from the topic of discussion here, that is the Kangri? It has two eyes that bear close resemblance to almonds. It also has ears which are sometimes adorned by admirers with ear-rings.

The respectable city-dame is, like the Kangri, generally dainty, but she has earned a bad name as a gormandizer. The Kangri, however, is frugal. Put a little soft coke or a handful of cinders into it at daybreak and it will keep you warm the whole day.

Coyness is the characteristic quality of this bride. Its eyes remain glued to the ground. It is without blemish. It provides warmth. Again, like a new bride, it is loving and obedient. It confines itself to the four walls of the house and does not peep out of the window. It always tends to hide itself. Unable to bear separation, it keeps close to its companion's body under the pheran.



On chilly winter nights, it affords great solace and satisfaction to the owner. It costs only a few chips and a handful of soft coke. It is a strange anomaly that while we describe it in our conversation as "feminine", it serves both men and women with equal zeal and zest.

For one not familiar with its working, it can prove disastrous. Once I was posted to the Gool Gulab Garh area in Jammu province where I had carried my kangri along. One day, a guest arrived. He had never seen a kangri before. In the evening, when he discovered it, he hugged to his bosom. He liked it so much that at bedtime he put it under the quilt and went to sleep.

At midnight he awoke with a shriek thinking that some devil had got into his bed. Instantly, he threw the quilt away. On hearing his shrieks, I also got up, somewhat in panic. A peer living in the adjoining apartment, stirred by the commotion, also rushed in. The guest was sweating profusely and his heart beat furiously. I failed to make anything out of the situation.

The peer grasped the anguished guest's arm and said

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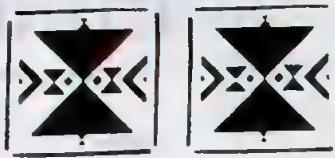
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to him, "Did you by any chance stray into the graveyard during the day? Some devil has cast its evil eye on you. Tomorrow I shall exorcise this vicious spirit. Keep a sacrificial goat ready. Even if it is a small one its colour should be black. Since mutton does not suit me, you should buy a kilo of chicken for me."

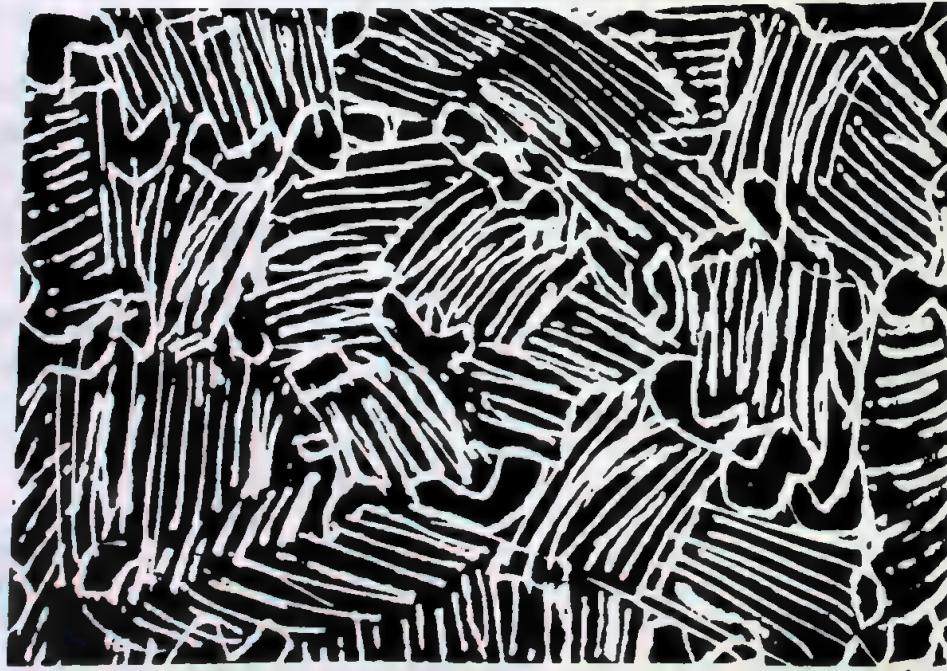
While the peer was thus discoursing, smell and smoke began to emanate from the burning quilt. I reached for the quilt and found the Kangri enveloped in it. The cat was out of the bag. The peer felt small thinking about the loss of his imaginary chicken, while my own real quilt got burnt. I felt much worse when I saw that the fire had also disfigured my darling Kangri.

Like the humans, the Kangri also gets worn out with age. One day its willow covering falls off and only the inner container of baked clay remains. Sometimes when the container accidentally breaks, only the covering is left dangling in the hand. But no Kashmiri can forget the Kangri's fullblomed youth, its gay colours and its willow "clothing". He is not tired of recalling all its attributes. Surely, it should haave been our national emblem; only we do not appreciate its great importance. Our leaders could at least use it as their election symbol.

The truth is that the Kangri has been mainly responsible for saving the pheran from extinction. It has sustaiined our economy which the shortage of electricity would have reduced to shambles. Without it, the mouths of Kashmiris

would remain frozen for half the year, ruling out the possibility of holding elections in February or the pasdge of the budget in the assembly. Such activity is made smooth only by the heartwarming assistance rendered by the Kangri. In many local mob melee too, the Kangri comes in handy as a cheap, durable, potent and decisive weapon. In spite of all this, none is willing to grant it its due.

(By permission of the author. Dr. Azurda is the author of "Thorns and Thistles" a collection of essays in Kashmiri (Translated by T.N. Kaul) published by Mirza Publications Srinagar India).



SR

LIFE

Babita Mam

Life is a mystery an unsolved riddle,
 A puzzle with which all of us fiddle,
 Thirst which never seems to dwindle,
 A fire, new emotions it kindles.
 What is life?
 Life to a Vanquished is an unfulfilled dream
 Life to famished is a morsel of food,
 Life to a fighter is relentless struggle,
 Life to a fanatic is an achievable ecstasy,
 Life to a mourner is a bleeding wound,
 Life to a lover is an unquenched desire,
 Life to a drunkard is a fresh bottle of wine,
 Life to a youth is zeal, enthusiasm and freedom,
 Life to a newborn is pain and turmoil,
 Life to old is experience and prayers,
 And life to science is a series of movements.
 Life, say is a linkage from man to man
 binding them at two points, birth and death.

(Courtesy Koshur Samachar Nov 87)



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Rajiv Pandit

In the present day, developing a solid foundation on which to build the rest of one's life involves painstaking effort. But when a person is the product of two diverse cultures, the task can seem impossible.

I was born in India and have been raised according to that nation's traditions -- but in the sometimes contrasting environment of the United States. The implications of this go beyond than arriving home, for example, in a tank top shirt after weightlifting to say "Namastay Jee" to my "tabla" teacher, who is ready to begin my lesson. In this case one "world" ends at the door of my home. But what happens when these two worlds clash, as on a Saturday night?

Taking a girl to a school prom dance can be an interesting experience, but equally interesting is the feat of introducing her to my parents. Although nothing may seem out of the ordinary during the introduction of my date, I can detect a sense of anxiety in my parents which is also manifested on many other similar occasions involving a confrontation of two cultures. To diminish their anxiety I have had to show my parents that I am still a Hindu at heart and that taking a girl out to a dance is only a harmless compromise of two unique traditions. Speaking Hindi or compromise of two unique traditions. Speaking Hindi or Kashmiri at home and learning the recipes of some of Mom's Kashmiri (ethnic) dishes are just two ways of accomplishing this, providing also a wonderful learning experience.



SD

As an Indian bayta, however, I have had to spend one night a week for some Indian customs as "puja" or other religious or non-religious get-togethers. My favourite pastime is to try to understand the plot of a three-hour Indian film that is almost always filled with complicated plot-twists. But I am not trying to understand my native culture by such activities as playing tabla, studying our divine images and understanding the symbolism and dances, and learning our scriptures; and, best of all, meeting and talking with other teenagers who come from a similar cultural background as mine.

I have benefited more than I could have ever imagined from living in two distinct cultures. I am now convinced that wisdom can never be achieved from the teachings of simply one culture. So I have learned to sort out the "gray area" that emerges from the combination of my two cultures. In a matter of speaking, I have learned when it is proper to say "Hello", when it is proper to say "Namaskar", and when either is acceptable.

The most demanding responsibility I have had to face while growing up is to survive both as an epitome of American teenager and the Kashmiri "bayta" (implying mama's boy). As an American teenager I have benefitted from a great piece of advice from H.D. Thoreau, who once said, "They need take only the first step toward perfection: self-criticism". In essence, this was and still is the key to growing up in America. For example, as a child in elementary school, I was embarrassed about being an Indian, which meant being different. I stood aloof from my classmates. Only when I realized that I was bringing this onto myself by actually feeling different from my peers, could I change. I had been playing into their hands. I then became involved in after-school activities such as Cub Scouts and baseball. Now, as a teenager, I am still able to blend in with my friends and enjoy their American customs while still maintaining my cultural identity.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

D.N. DHAR



DND

Architect painter and author, D.N. Dhar studied Architecture and Town Planning at the Bombay School of Architecture and the University of London. He is a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects. A competent painter, he has won many prizes for his works. His works have been exhibited at the national exhibitions of the Lalit Kala Academy, New Delhi. He is the author of Industrial Housing for the Tropics, a standard reference volume on the subject.

Mr. Dhar was Architect to Kashmir State for eight years, and to the Ministry of Defence, Government of India, for 13 years, during which he designed Air Force stations and Naval bases, including townships for ordnance factories. Of the new Tourist Reception Centre in Srinagar designed by him Professor Sir L.F. Rushbrook-Williams has said: "The Centre is among the best planned I have seen in any country."

Mr. Dhar resigned from the Ministry of Defence in 1962 and joined the Indian Architect which he edited for nearly 30 years.

Mr. Dhar is now retired. His recent book "Thoughts on Architecture" published by Sterling - Private Publishers Ltd. is a collection of editorials from "Indian Architect".

YOUTH IMAGES

Sometimes I wonder what the future holds for me. What attitude will my children take towards my two cultures? Will they be able to speak out native languages? Will they even care about our wonderful heritage? Then I realize how tough it must have been for my parents to leave their homeland, come here, and raise their children

according to the same beliefs as they were raised in. As I grow older, I realize that I have not only one but two foundations to support me. I must put one foot on each foundation and stand tall about it all.

(Courtesy Miltsar Koa Newsletter, Michigan, U.S.A.)



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ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS



G.R. SANTOSH

Multi-talented, painter, poet, playwright and author Ghulam Rasool Santosh is known as Leonardo Di-Vinci of Kashmir. He received his initial training in landscape painting from late Dina Nath Raina. In 1954 he was selected for a Government of India scholarship to study under Professor Bende of M.S. University of Baroda. In 1957 he received his first national award, an honour that was bestowed on him again in 1963 and 1967.

Santosh has dominated the country's art scene for over 30 years. His major contribution has been in the revival of ancient Tantric Art tradition which occurred after his visit to Amarnath in 1964. Santosh has exhibited extensively at home and abroad and has been a member of the Board of the Lalit Kala Academy for a long time.

In 1977 Santosh was honoured with Padma Shree and in 1979 Sahitya Academy presented him the prestigious award for a collection of his poem "Besukh-Ruh". He also won the "Kathana Award" given by the Kashmir Education and Science Society in 1984.

Kashmir, as a magazine for promoting social, cultural and literary heritage of our rich past and tradition is an idea suggested by Santosh. We look forward for his continued encouragement, contribution and advice. He also writes regularly for Kosher Samachar and literary journals.

T.N. KAUL



After an illustrious career spanning four decades as a Journalist based in New Delhi, Mr. T.N. Kaul (b. 1922) has now dedicated himself to the service of Kashmiri language and literature, with the main object of projecting these to the outside world.

His translation of Dr. Zaman Azurdah's book of Kashmir essays into English has just been published under the title of "Thorns and Thistles". The Kashmir version had won Dr. Azurdah the National Academy of Letters award for 1984.

His second book, an English rendering of Kashmir poet Mahjoor's compositions, is being shortly published by the National Academy of Letters (Sahitya Akademi), New Delhi, under the title of "Garlands and Goblets."

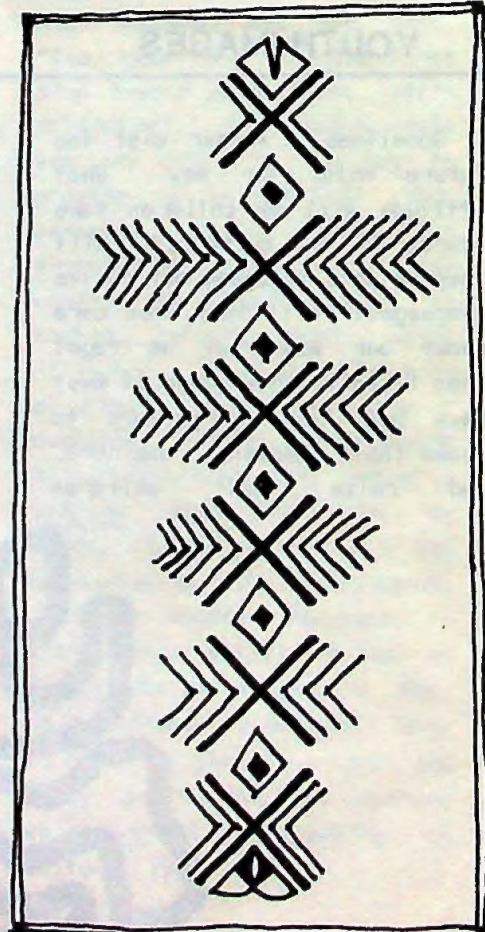
Mr. Kaul, has recently taken over as Editor for Kashmiri, Sahitya Academy, New Delhi. Mr. Kaul has just completed work on a chronology of Literary Events in Kashmir for the period 1800-1910 and also written a History of Kashmiri Literature covering the same period as part of the Sahitya Academy assignment. At present he is assisting in the prestigious Sahitya Academy project for compilation on an "Anthology of Modern Indian Literature (1800-1975)" comprising 22 languages.

Mr. Kaul writes regularly for National Indian dailies and literary journals.

DR. Z. AZURDHA



Dr. Azurdha passed M.A. in Urdu from Kashmir University in 1970 and later obtained a doctorate in Urdu. His PhD thesis won him awards from the Urdu Academies of U.P., West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh. He joined Kashmir University as a lecturer in 1973 and at present is head of the Department of Kashmiri. In 1984 his collection of essays in Kashmiri won him the prestigious Sahitya Academy award. Dr. Azurdha has more than ten publications to his credit which include essays, short stories and biographies.





SR

- Rajiv Pandit

Rajiv has received KOA (Kashmir overseas association) award for high school graduates for 1987.

He wrote the essay in support of his application for admission to the University of Michigan where he is enrolled now.

- Babita Mam

Information not available at the time of printing.

- Mohan K. Swaminatri

Information not available at the time of printing.

- Mohan K. Tikoo

Information not available at the time of printing.

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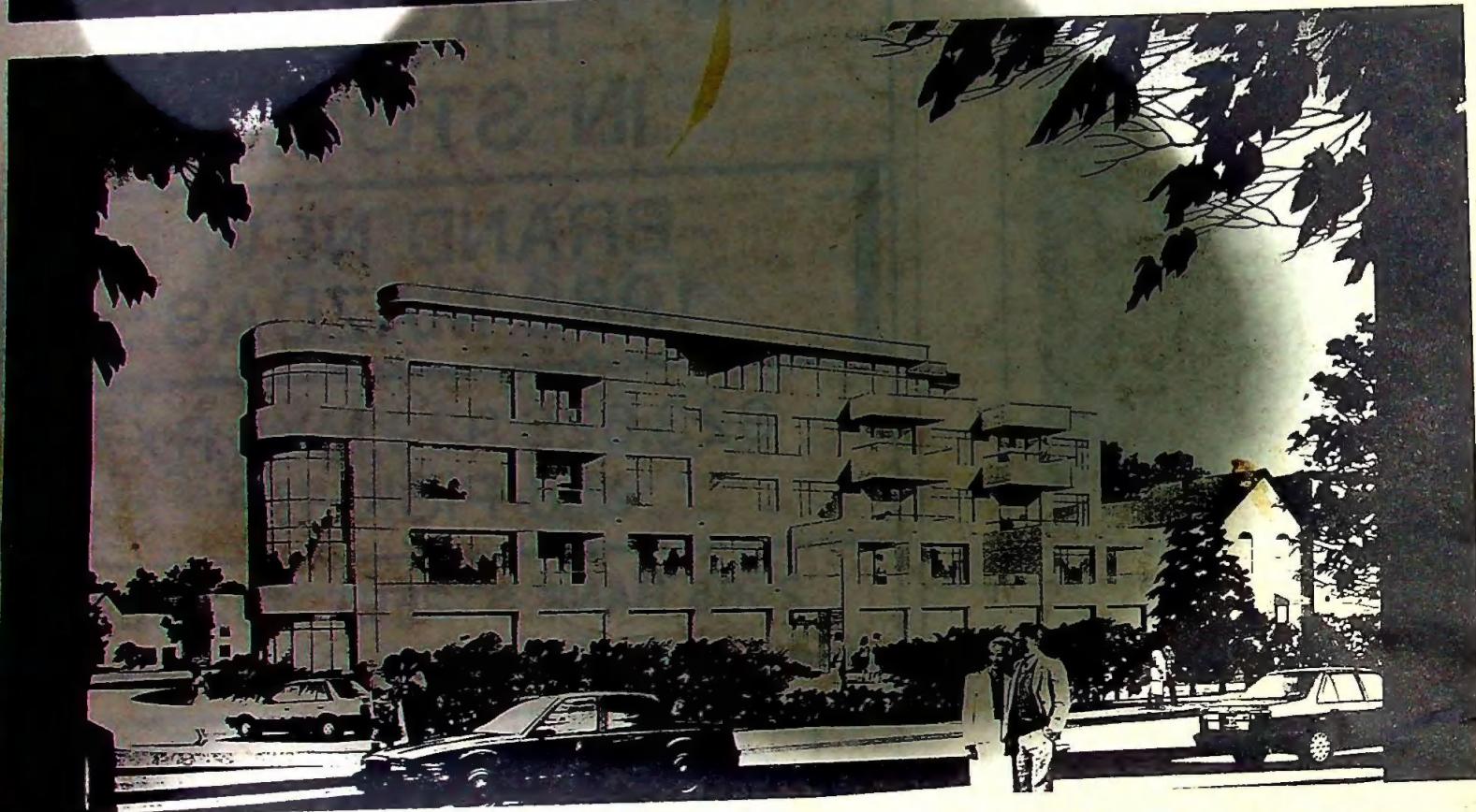
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